



Wood Chipper Safety



If you've ever seen what a wood chipper can do to a large tree branch, you'll quickly realize why safety precautions are extremely important when using this powerful piece of equipment. Wood chipper-related injuries can range from minor scrapes to eye injuries to amputations, and can even be fatal. Most fatal incidents result from being caught in the chipper, and a smaller number occur when an object kicks back from the chipper, striking the operator. To avoid accidents, follow the precautions below:

Safe Operation Practices:

- Read the manual and obtain training on the proper use of the equipment.
- Inspect the woodchipper and chock the wheels prior to each use.
- Remove all debris prior to each use.
- Make sure that guards are properly in place.
- Stand to the side of the machine when feeding materials and do not reach or kick inside the feed chute for any reason.
- Assign at least two employees to support each other while operating the chipper.
- Do not wear any loose-fitting clothing, including loose safety vests or chaps, when feeding the chipper, and secure long hair or beards.
- If the chipper becomes plugged, shut it down and apply lock-out/tag-out procedures.
- Only use a wooden type push paddle to push small material into the feed wheels.
- Keep the area around the chipper clean to avoid slipping or tripping.

Recommended Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- Eye protection/safety glasses.
- Hearing protection/ear plugs/earmuffs.
- Gloves without cuffs.
- Slip-resistant footwear.
- Hand protection.

Maintenance:

- Fluids should be checked prior to each use.
- Lock the drum/cutting wheel when performing maintenance.
- Clean the air filter regularly.
- Be sure that all instructions and safety stickers are still intact and visible on the equipment.
- Replace blades and spark plugs annually.
- Test the emergency shutoff and direction reverse prior to each use.

Additional Resources:

- Hazards of Wood Chippers - [Chipper SHIB.4.1.08 \(osha.gov\)](#)
- Preventing Wood Chipper Fatalities - [Preventing Wood Chipper Fatalities | Blogs | CDC](#)
- Preventing Wood Chipper Fatalities Video - [Action Page – Preventing Wood Chipper Fatalities \(ca.gov\)](#)
- [TMLIRP Media Library](#)
 - Basic Training for Ground Operations in Tree Care: Brush Chipper Orientation and Maintenance, DVD # 281
 - PPE: Don't Start Work Without It , DVD #667